Southern Georgia
Regional Transit Development Plan

Public Meeting #2 Summary

April 2025

1.0 Overview

The second public meeting for the Southern Georgia Regional Transit Development Plan (TDP) was held on April 17, 2025, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held virtually, and members of the public were invited to join the live presentation via Zoom. The meeting was also recorded, then posted on the project website for the public to view. The meeting included a project overview, highlights from work completed to date, and discussion related to transit alternatives, vision and goals statements, and next steps. Meeting participants provided input via an interactive polling tool throughout the meeting.

Meeting Agenda

6:00   Welcome & Project Overview

6:10   Community Input & Vision and Goals

6:20   Highlights from Conditions & Needs Analysis

6:30   Transit Alternatives & Input

6:55   Next Steps & Stay Engaged

1.1   Attendance

Three members of the public, all of whom indicated that they live in Lowndes County, attended the virtual meeting.

Table 1. Meeting Attendees by County

Residential County	Count of Attendees
Lowndes County	2
Coffee County	1

Figure 1. Social media collateral for the 2nd Public Meeting

2.0 Meeting Summary

2.1 Welcome and Project Overview

The planning team, led by Amy Martin with Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC), began with introductions before interactive introductions for members of the public. Using Mentimeter, the planning team asked participants to share their experience with public transit in the Southern Georgia Region, with one attendee indicating that they have used SGRC Transit and two additional attendees indicating they had not used SGRC Transit or Valdosta On-Demand.

An overview of the project was then given by Amanda Hatton, with Blue Cypress Consulting. She outlined the purpose of the Regional Transit Development Plan (TDP), including historical context of transit plannign within the Southern Georgia Region and the state of Georgia. Amanda also gave an overview of the planning goals, key plan components, and project schedule, which showed that the plan is scheduled to be adopted in September of 2025.

2.2 Community Input & Vision and Goals

The presentation touched on the role of community input within the planning process. Highlights from this process include Project Advisory Committee meetings, public meetings, public surveys, a roadshow of materials at local community centers, and interviews with Southern Georgia Region stakeholders. Amanda shared key, recurring themes from community input thus far, which include:

- All areas of the region should have access to transit.
- Transit service at its core is about providing more mobility options, particularly for those who do not have the option to drive.

- The population is aging, and reliable transit is necessary to provide access to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and other daily needs.
- Transit as a means to access jobs is critical for the region's economic development.
- Infrastructure and technology trends are important considerations for the future of transit in the region.

Lastly, the draft Vision and Goals Statements were shared, and participants were encouraged to review the statements and provide feedback using Public Survey #2, which include questions surrounding the draft Vision and Goals Statements.

2.3 Highlights from Conditions & Needs Analysis

Ansley Belton, with Blue Cypress Consulting, highlighted some key aspects of the existing conditions analysis, including existing transit services, travel patterns in the region and adjacent communities, and destinations the community travels to frequently based on the first community survey. She also discussed findings from the planning team's transit propensity analysis, which explored factors such as zero-car households, individuals with disbaility, seniors, and more. The analysis show counties with the highest transit propensity and likely the greatest needs for transit service. She also discussed rural transit demand (currrent and projected) for rural areas of the region. Compatible transit service types for population and employment centers in the region, including Tifton, Waycross, and Valdosta, were explored through the needs assessment process. The needs assessment included both technical analysis and inputs form the community input process.

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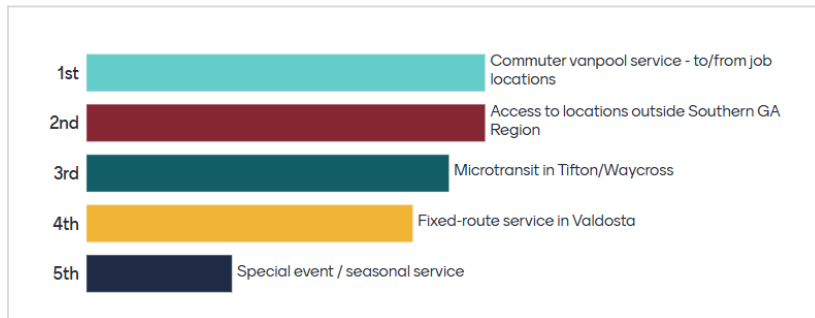## 2.4   Transit Alternatives and Input

Billy Bachman, with Spatial Plans, gave an overview of transit alternatives being considered for plan recommendation. He began by highlighting the types of transit that could be considered as a part of the plan. Transit alternatives are organized in three distinct categories: transit service expansion, transit service enhancements, and administrative tools & guidance. Billy gave an overview of each category and the potential alternatives for each, then asked participants to give feedback on the alternatives using a web-based polling tool.

Below are the results from the various polling questions.

2.4.1   Transit Service Expansion

Billy reviewed six different transit service expansion options that asked participants to prioritize expansion options for five expansion options that were not yet planned.

Figure 2. Rank the transit expansion alternatives by priority

Participants were then asked to name specific locations that they may want to access in the following questions:

Can you think of any specific employers or work locations that could benefit from having a commuter van service?

- Hotel/Motel and food service

Are there locations outside of the Southern Georgia Region that you would like to access via transit?
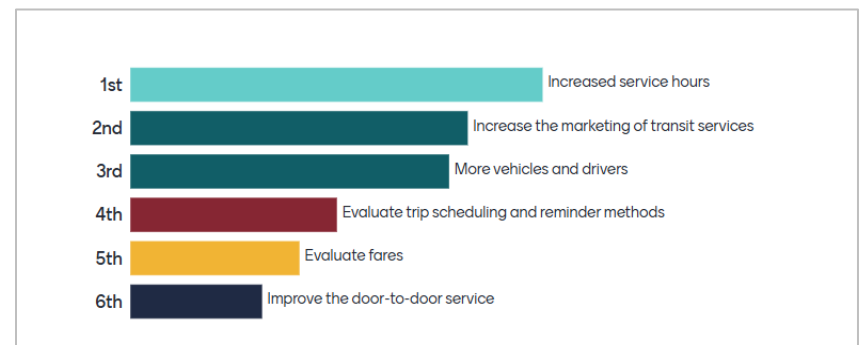
No responses to this question.

If fixed-route service (such as bus with set stops) is implemented in Valdosta, what areas of town (or specific locations) should be considered?

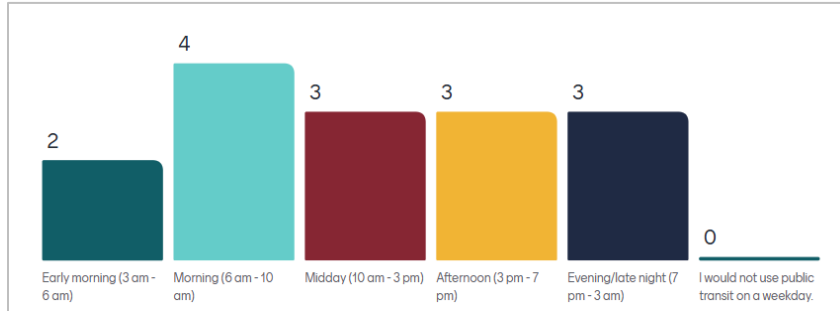*No responses to this question.*

2.4.2   Transit Service Enhancement and Administrative Alternatives

The project team then gave an overview of the transit service enhancements and administrative alternatives, explaining the options which included changes to service hours and schedules, marketing tactics, increasing the number of vehicles available, evaluating fares, and improving service. The responses to these questions can be seen in the figures below.
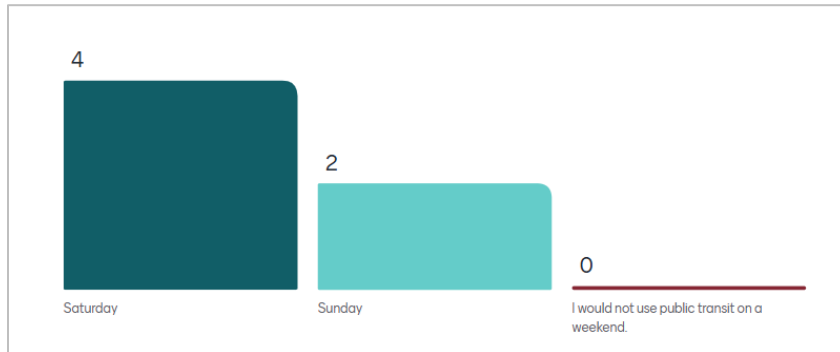
Figure 3. Rank the transit enhancement/admin alternatives by priority

Figure 4. On a typical weekday, during what times of day would it be most useful for you to have transit service (SGRC Transit, Via, or other) available?

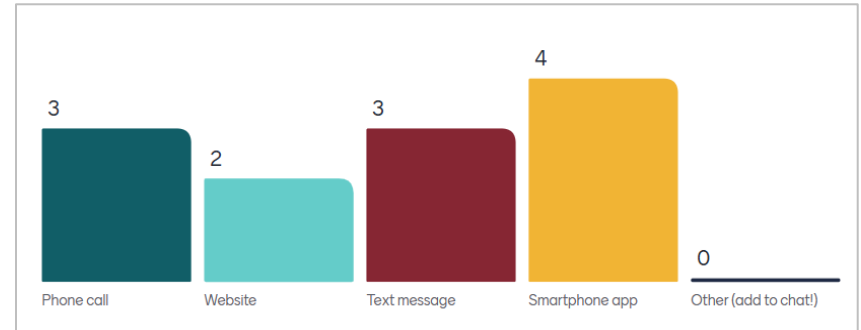*Figure 6. What is the best method for you to schedule, cancel, and get updates about transit rides?*

Figure 5. On a typical weekend, what day(s) would it be most useful for you to have transit service (SGRC Transit, Via, or other) available?

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Figure 7. What is the best way(s) to get the word out about transit service? (Select all that apply)

Is there anything else that you would like to share with us as we plan for future transit in the region?

No responses to this question,

2.5   Next Steps & Stay Engaged

Before ending the meeting, Amanda (Blue Cypress) gave reminders about the next steps and the planning process. Community members are encouraged to stay engaged and participate in the second public survey. SGRC will be distributing hard copies of the survey. The final public input period is anticipated for August 20025, when the draft plan will be made available for a 30-day public comment period prior to its adoption. More information is available at the project website.

Amy Martin (SGRC) ended the meeting by thanking the planning team for its hard work. She noted that the recording will be posted and that SGRC will be promoting the final community survey online. She encouraged community members to participate in the survey and provide input.